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Just in Time: Rosemary Butcher, Making Memories and Marks

Susan Melrose, Stefanie Sachsenmaier and Rosemary Butcher



Fig 1

Rosemary Butcher, *Touch the Earth*, 1987 (with Heinz Dieter Pietsch, Michael Nyman, Jonathan Burrows, Maedee Dupres, Dennis Greenwood, Alexander Howard, Sue MacLennan, Caroline Pegg, Helen Rowsell, Wendy Thomas)

...in the end I have nothing new to say. Why detain you with these worn-out stories? ... Why archive this? ... Why mobilize so much space and so much work, so much typographic composition? Does this merit printing? Aren't these stories to be had everywhere? (Derrida reading Freud, in "Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression...")

What is at stake in the relatively recent urge to document, annotate or archive decision-making processes in creative practices?

Others, patently, have posed related questions (not least Derrida's "Archive Fever...", first published in French in 1995), but ironically enough for those of us who work in performance, they tend to have done so through the written text – just as we are constrained, in part, to do here.

Who or what has driven the historically-specific urge to document – and who has benefited from it? If we were to argue here that creative decisions made are self-annotating, and that *in what is made lies its own archive* – for those able to find it – would these words of ours find a place in the present edition? A first implication might be that only the artist should document her own work, and not necessarily in words; the second implication might be that a spectator has the right, nonetheless, to 'archive' her own experience of that work. That experience of the artist's work might well, now, inhabit her own memory.

Writers, and other wordsmiths, tend to be blissfully expert in the sorts of fields that collocate *around* creative decision-making in performance – not least where university researchers hold sway. Yet surely what some of us, published writer-researchers as we are, might want – almost desperately – to hold onto, still evades those almost desperate

The Test Pieces (2014 – ongoing). June 2015 – Rosemary Butcher is currently in rehearsals for a large project entitled *Memory in the Present Tense* (a title proposed in conversation by Susan Melrose): it is a continually expanding retrospective as part of which several works – reworked archive works, archive film material, new film work, new live work, as well as an exhibition – will be presented at Tanz im August in Berlin 2015. Within the overall focus on time – the past, present and future – her involvement and engagement with her own archive has in parts been driven by a preoccupation with what she terms 'language at source and the territory of experience', involving questions not only on how a new language can be found but also: What was the language that was used for making *Site* (1983)? What was significant in the way that movement vocabulary was accessed, and motivated? How has language moved on from *Secrets of the Open Sea* (2014) to the *Test Pieces* (2014 – ongoing)?

Rosemary Butcher created an initial version of what has evolved into the work *The Test Pieces* for Kunstbau im Lenbachhaus, Munich, in 2014 – a former underground station that has been transformed into a contemporary gallery space. She reworked the piece for Nottdance 2015, as part of which it was presented at Nottingham Contemporary Gallery. For the Tanz im August Berlin commission she is reworking it once again.

The Test Pieces involves four dancers who handle large ropes. Live cameras capture fragments of the performance, which are transmitted onto monitors placed in the space. Butcher, after each instantiation of the work, has 'moved on' and 'wants the piece to grow'. . . In rehearsals she further mentioned that so far she had set herself something to do 'that there wasn't enough time for', which led her to 'draw conclusions' in the earlier versions of *The Test Pieces*.

attempts at capture. Our words in what follows, that is to say, are not so much 'about Rosemary Butcher', a focus that continues to hold our attention, but they are also – in the present context – 'about' the *problem for writing itself* that is posed (often unwittingly) by the expert practitioner whose practices are multi-modal, multi-dimensional, poetic, minimalist, challenging, discipline-specific, interdisciplinary, 'new' – yet, still, somehow, 'dance'. (It will be clear in the discourses pieced together here that our central focus is the named choreographer and the continuity and development of her creative decision-making, rather more than it is on the artistry of the composer, lighting designer, visual artist or the work of the highly trained, individual dancers – despite the importance of their invention - in her ongoing production of work.)

How might the multi-modal expert-practitioner archive 'her work', and why would she want to? One answer seems to come to us from the artist herself: '*what was I doing, then, and what am I doing, now?*' To us, Rosemary Butcher's question is provoking, firstly because it is always present, for her as a creative artist making new work. Secondly, the question provokes because it seems to us to concern and to be concerned with something *other than* a set of expert performance-making *practices* themselves, even those specific to the 'signature practices' of the established artist. For us the question harks back to a Freudian

As such these conclusions were conceptually at odds with the work that emerged. Instead the work, she explains, should be created by trial and error – 'there is no quick way'.

As part of the process of reworking *The Test Pieces*, Butcher takes into consideration 'things that didn't work before'; she is also working with different dancers – Lauren Potter, Ben Ash, Charlie Morrissey, Lucy Suggate – most of whom she has a history of working with in the past. The selection of dancers is based on an established trust, but the reworking of *The Test Pieces* also involves a highly particular effort focused on making new relationships with the particular dancers again.

Through *The Test Pieces* (see Fig 2 below) and parallel teaching projects Butcher investigates the idea of a choreographic work that records itself through the body's making itself visible in space and time.

The piece works with the notion of leaving something behind through the use of the abstract idea of the body printing itself in space. Butcher assumes that if the intention of the body is to do this, then in some ways this is no different from a painting or a piece of work having a dialogue, with the work itself being an extension of this dialogue. Butcher mentions that there is a visual dilemma, in that in this way of working she has less control over a visual aesthetic than the way she has choreographed in the past – giving meticulous instructions to determine and fix movement in collaboration with her dancers in space and time. 'You have to work harder into what you see', she says now, always on the level of aiming to achieve for the work to fulfill its intention.

notion revisited by the French philosopher J-F Lyotard, under the heading of the term 'passing', and in the context of his writing in the 1980s about time

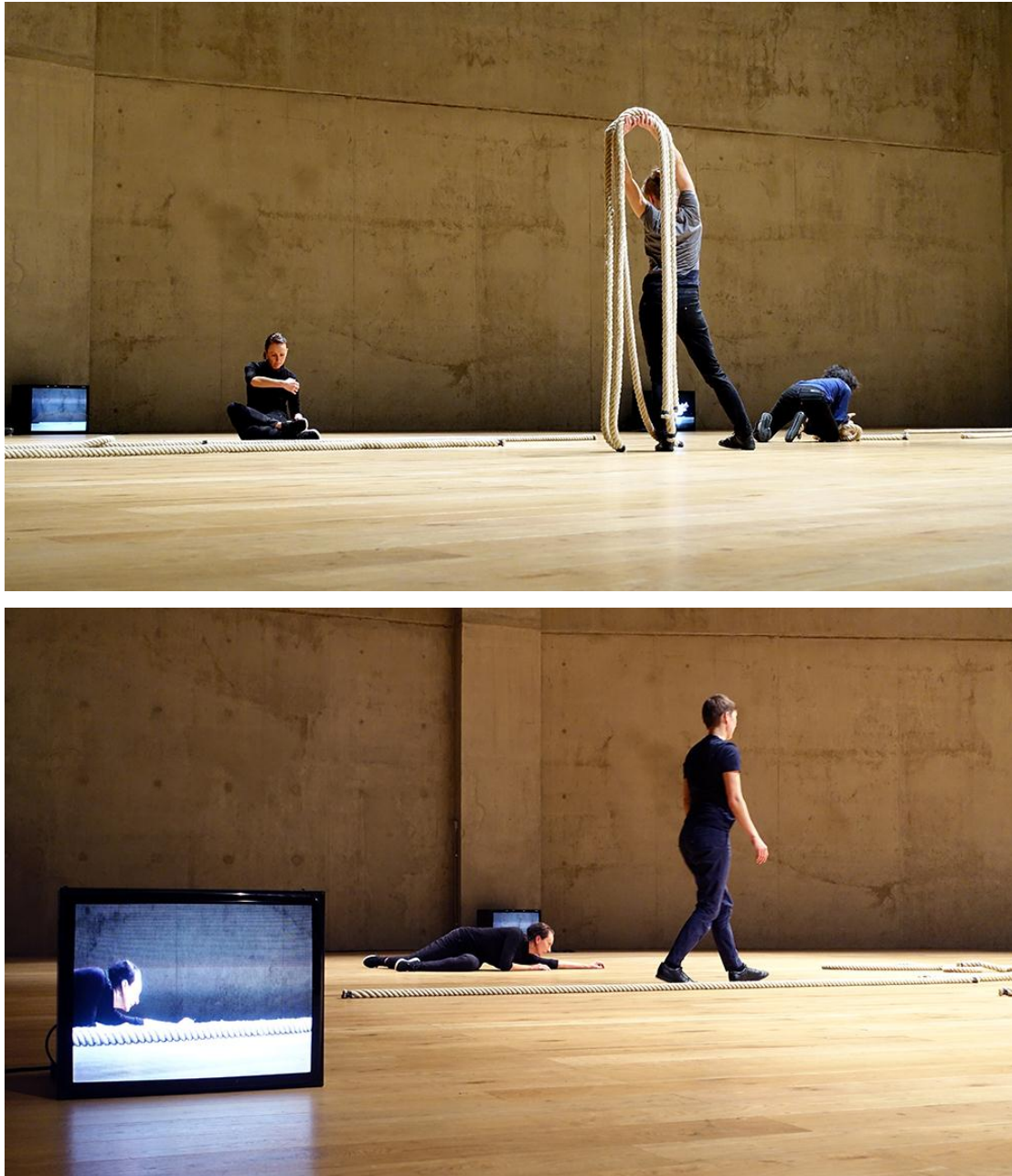
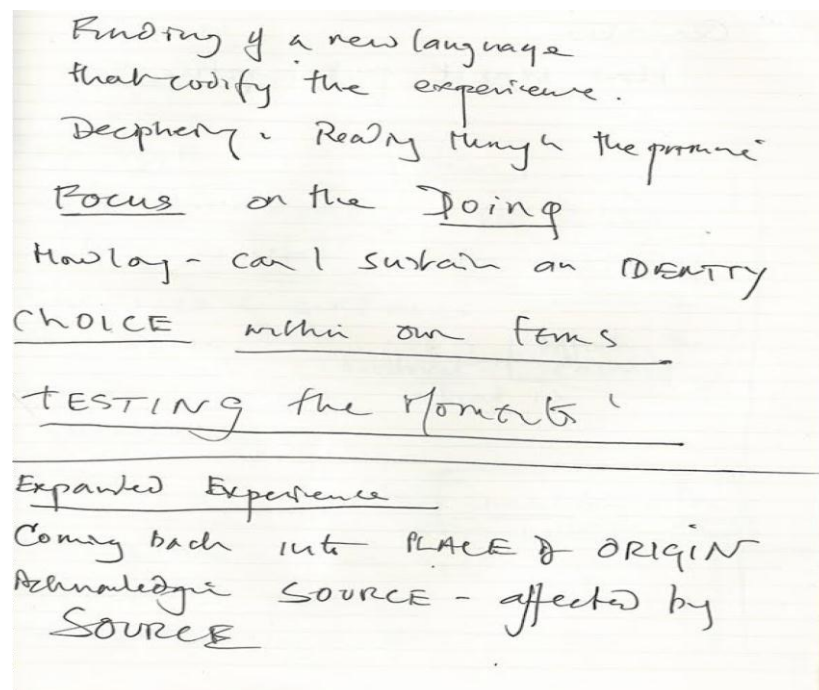
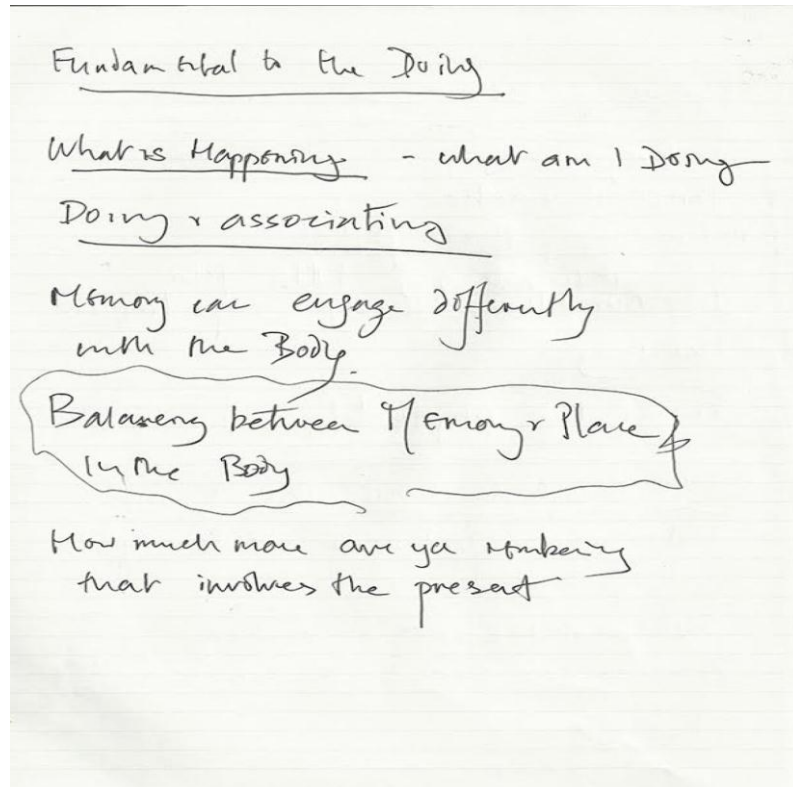


Fig 2

The Test Pieces (Nottdance 2015), **Choreography** Rosemary Butcher, **Screens** Sam Williams, **Sound** Simon Keep, **Dancers** Sabine Glenz, Judith Hummel, Ana Mira, Katrin Schafitel

and digital technologies. We are revisiting it here because it was written before the digital became commonplace, taken – widely as it is – for granted. In 'Logos and *Techne*, or Telegraphy', Lyotard focuses on 'the programming and control of memorizing' (62), from the perspective of inscription (or 'putting into

traces') which both 'opens a public space of meaning and generates a community of users-producers', and, 'because it is [...] marked on a spatial support, [it] conserves the sign of the past event, or ... produces it as available, presentable and reactualizable memory' (47-48).



Figs 3 & 4 Notebook Rosemary Butcher

When Scott deLahunta subtitled his Introduction to (*Capturing Intention*): *Documentation, analysis and notation...* (2007) with the words 'the body has to be clear and the words have to be right', the notions of 'capturing intention' and of the rightness of words held our attention. Rosemary Butcher's opening words in Figs 3 and 4 above concern a language that might be '[f]undamental to the doing', but she goes on to note the problematic issue of *wording* what she was doing: 'How to find a new language, that could codify the experience' of the past, so that it can be used again, albeit differently, in the future? According to Lyotard, technological inscription (for which writing is the model), of a 'something' that, importantly, pre-exists that inscription, involves three sorts of memory-effects (of that pre-existing 'something') that are likely to figure in any construction of the archive.

These three memory-effects, he writes, are 'breaching, scanning and passing' (48), and they 'coincide more or less with three very different sorts of temporal synthesis linked to inscription: habit, remembering... and anamnesis' (to which we return below) (55). It is 'passing' that resonates with the notion of 'capturing intention', not by ratifying it, but by beginning to acknowledge that capture, in this

Rosemary Butcher's work, more and more, it seems, spills onto the page. We have been writing with her. We have not been practising an interpretative writing *after the event*, framed by conceptual parameters exterior to the 'work'. Instead, we have approached working with Butcher over the past decade with a significant degree of flexibility. Our approach has been not only to write with Rosemary Butcher, but through her, for her and about her – where the 'her' stands for a name that stands in turn for what Susan Melrose calls a 'signature practice' (www.sfmelrose.org.uk) – before, during and after creative processes of choreography-making, and where an 'after' inevitably would already constitute a 'before' of another work to be made.

Butcher notes that in rehearsals she only responds to what she sees of the performer/s at work, and can never predetermine it. She has an interest in the development of performance material from language: 'As the piece evolves, the language evolves'. In her work with dancers the 'labeling' of movement is a highly important part of the creative process.

In a filmed conversation with dancer Elena Giannotti Butcher states that Giannotti was able to make a specific language 'visible'. Giannotti observes that the creation of a set of references became the territory that allowed her to identify her boundaries in terms of movement.

'There is always a *silent outline*', Butcher states, 'a form into which things come into or don't belong'. Certain aspects will not have the strength to remain in the frame, or perhaps belong to another piece. This process involves copious notes taken during rehearsals, and at the end of the day, by Butcher and the dancers.

case, is an irresolvable desire. In order to begin to understand a few of the implications (for the archive, for 'intention' and for 'capture') of 'passing', we need to explore all three memory-effects. We argue that they are always likely to be engaged in the attempt (and in the failures – an 'intricate and intriguing problem' (56)) to inscribe. We are supposing that when Rosemary Butcher 'makes new work' that is infused by her recall – likely to be immersive – of works made *in the past*, certain aspects of these 'works made' already inhabit her, and they 'come back to her' (how? in what form/s?) *in the present*, when she steps into the workshop space where new work will be made (*for the future*). How does she disarticulate/articulate them anew

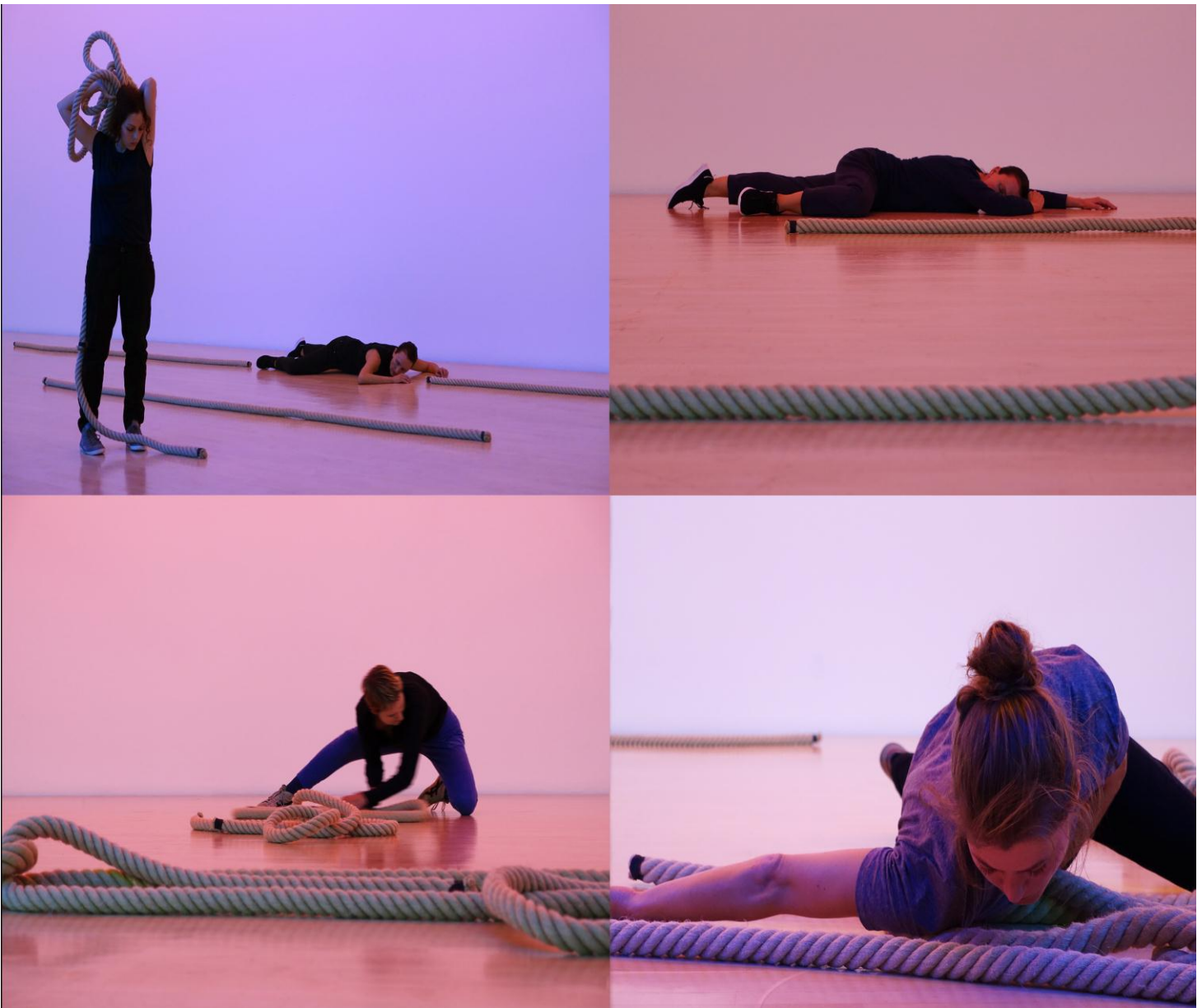


Fig 5

New Work (Kunstbau Munich 2014), **Choreography** Rosemary Butcher, **Sound** Simon Keep, **Dancers** Sabine Glenz, Judith Hummel, Katrin Schafitel, Mey Sefan

They are unlikely to return 'whole', or in their innocence, as we note below. They will have been 'worked through' in Butcher's ongoing critical engagement. (In this sense, and this is important to understand, the historically-specific event does not foreclose on the artist's own engagement; nor has she necessarily seen what a spectator sees, in the event – 'in any event'. Nor did she, it would seem, applaud each time a spectator applauds. *What she knows*, in other words, is both acutely engaged and different. How to inscribe that knowing – other than through making new work?)

The Rosemary Butcher archive is likely to approach this curious temporal synthesis through explicit recourse to the three memory-effects of 'breaching, scanning and passing': these types of process are likely, similarly, to produce, from 'the same work', different types of data, with different degrees and types of resonance.

Breaching or habit, Lyotard explains, 'is a [stabilized] energetic set-up', 'which structures a certain type of behavior in a certain type of contextual situation'. 'Dance', or perhaps 'the trained dancer's preparedness for dance', in a workshop or rehearsal situation is just such an 'energetic set-up', stabilized in nature, hence extractable and transferable from one such situation to another:

This is just as much the case for so-called sensory data – colours and sounds – to the exact extent that their constitutive physical properties have been identified. ...these items of data can be synthesized anywhere and anytime to produce identical chromatic or acoustic products (simulacra). (50)

Fig 1, above, shows just such an 'energetic set-up'; and 'intention', in this shot, is effectively 'captured' by the inclusion of the trace of the apparently tensely watchful figure of the choreographer. (*'What was I doing then, and what am I doing now?'*) 'Elements ... which can be considered in isolation form a set which is notable for its double internal transcendence: the properties of the whole exceed those of the sum of the parts, and each element taken for itself is not exhausted by its definition as a part of a given totality' (48-9). In this 'memory-as-breaching', the element thereby 'tele-graphed' into the target inscription is delocalized and detemporalized, but reactualizable in the present,

and it is able to be typified, as we have above (Fig 1) as exemplary of a set of choreographic or directorial practices. However, something might seem, thereby, to be lost from this process, as many other writers have noted: the 'eventness' of the 'initial reception' has gone, not least because

the whole idea of an 'initial' reception, of what since Kant has been called an 'aesthetic', an empirical or transcendental mode whereby the mind is affected by a 'matter' which it does not fully control... - this whole idea seems completely out of date. (50)

It is, then, Lyotard continues, 'through its specific manner of inscription', likely to produce a mode of memorization freed 'from the...immediate conditions of time and space' (50); and this in turn means that it poses a keenly important question when we return to deLahunta's notion of the 'rightness' of words: 'what is a body (body proper, social body[, body in dance]) in tele-graphic culture?'. The simple term 'the body', so widely used in dance writing, is instantly problematized – as others have since argued, and some dismissed - in inscriptions within the digital archive.

The second mode of temporal synthesis linked to inscription, scanning, Lyotard explains, 'corresponds to the temporal synthesis traditionally called "remembering"' (51). Initially it seems most readily to relate to what is recovered through Butcher's own memory practices. As opposed to breaching, the synthesis of time that is scanning 'implies not only the retention of the past in the present as present, but the synthesis of the past as such' – (Butcher: *What was I doing then?*) – 'and its re-actualization as past in the present (of consciousness)' – (Butcher: *and what am I doing now?*). Scanning equally 'implies the identification of what is remembered, and its classification in a calendar and a cartography', such as we see in Butcher's account of works made over the past three or four decades in her "Afterword: Backward Glances, 1971-2000", in Butcher and Melrose, *Rosemary Butcher: Choreography, Collisions and Collaborations* (2005 pp.198-205).

Perhaps we erred, in that account, however, by failing to underline the importance of a number of recurring processes and syntheses in Butcher's practices, in favour of *eventness* ('eventicity') - a temporal sequence which located the named production, time and site as key to the account. The

metaphoric notion of 'looking back' *produces the past*, in this account, as linear, where each instance recalled draws on a 'memory-as-breaching' (production 1 1973, production 2 1976, production 3 1977) but the focus chosen, on the continuity of professional work (and a life), on named and dated productions, fails to account either for recurring and indeed stabilized processes of discovery that are Butcher's own, utilized and scrutinized across time; fails to account for the feedback loop, which once again transcends the specifics of time and place and *works across*, recovering and rejecting, discarding and re-embedding aspects of Butcher's own immersive experience of the making and the made.

'Remembering', Lyotard points out, may not be the 'right word' for capturing these processes, nor might the production of an account, in the archive, that is predicated on times passed that are marked out 'in a calendar and a cartography'. Nonetheless, Lyotard notes, '[i]n Kant's terms, remembering does not only signal the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction, but [also] the synthesis of recognition (51). When we remember – in for example any professional situation – something can seem to 'come back to us' that we recognize, grasp and might choose to 'replay' in the present situation; but in Henri Bergson's early work ('On Unconscious Simulation in States of Hypnosis', *Révue Philosophique* 1886) on recognition, a complex notion that in

The Test Pieces is a work in which Butcher explicitly states that she is dealing with 'not being able to know' what is happening. As she advised the dancers in rehearsals, they will not be able to feel too comfortable in the work because there will not be a way of predicting what will happen.

The piece itself, Butcher observed, is not interesting as such, it is the negotiation that the dancers engage in that will hold any potential interest. Butcher explained that she sees her role as keeping a momentum of discovery in the work: 'questions and negotiations are feeding the body'. No movements are fixed and there is no fixed score that is developed in rehearsals. 'The end result will be all of the things you have done', Butcher observes.

Yet there are parameters that are set through the notes Butcher provides. The work's future will in some ways have to be 'predetermined' (Lyotard, 1991: 65).

So rather than handling the rope as a prop, the dancers are invited to deal with the way the rope is framed in the space and how they frame themselves with the rope. Butcher places a focus on the sense of an activity and asks the dancers to always maintain the doing and handling of the rope, and allowing their movement to be part of this at times. Lines and arcs, crossing the space – waiting, dropping, piling, pulling, holding, shifting, carrying... as procedures of making movement.

everyday usage assumes both a normative and a psychological component, equally involves unconscious memories that come into play. The term 'unconscious' is a difficult one for theoretical enquiry, although the notion tends to figure less problematically in the everyday and its stories. In drawing in this particular context on both Lyotard's and Derrida's interest in Freud (or 'Freud'), we do not need to adopt the notion of an unconscious characterized by repressed feelings, complexes or hidden phobias, except insofar as we have observed a return in Rosemary Butcher's choreographic practices to a 'something' that might be described as 'spinozan' – to do with spaces, energized human bodies and their potential for affect, precision of human action and detail, over time – that she has not yet adequately articulated to her own satisfaction (and may be unlikely ever to do so). This 'something' does not lend itself to a 'talking cure', but rather to an ongoing praxiological undertaking (an engagement through a logic of practices that is both choreographic – hence discipline-specific – and 'signed' – hence singular) that is not exhausted by the work produced.

If we accept the existence and potential importance to making new work of unconscious memories in the expert practitioner, a key question emerges: how to *figure* these, in turn, in the archive? How might we digitally re-present the play, in artmaking or art made, of 'unconscious memories'? Must we name these

A further work to be presented at Tanz im August 2015 is *SCAN*, which was first performed in 1997 and again in 2002. The piece, at the time, had a focus on a past as well as a thinking forward. Butcher states she has only recently gone back to the idea of the freedom of improvisation that she had worked with in the 1970s and 1980s, with having enough knowledge now of how to set structures through endless processing of giving certain information and it resulting in a specific kind of response from the dancers.

This relates to the idea of recording the 'eventuality' of what she sets up:

'Something happens and I am recording it and then relaying it back. I am recording it by my notes and my drawings as they do it [as the dancers move]. I record what happens – what I think happens. And then I replay' (Butcher in conversation May 2015).

This process, she explains, is not about correcting, but it is about rebuilding every time, hence documenting itself. 'It is refined, but only by associations, it is not individually refined'.

Butcher will say for instance to the dancers: 'There is a lot of blurred imagery throughout', and a dancer may say, 'what do you mean by blurred imagery?'

'A lack of focus then?', and Butcher might add:

'That works *sometimes*, but you have to be careful when you blur and when you are distinct.'

as such, and if they could be named or figured, would we not run the risk of destroying them as such?

If a stimulus perceived by the creative practitioner at work can trigger recall, offering the possibility of its reproduction in the present moment, it is equally likely to bring with it both affect (intense, pleasing or displeasing), and a charge of memories that can seem to 'thicken' and complexify its possible replay in the present. In Butcher's notorious minimalism, what the stimulus is likely to trigger in the artist is equally likely both to inform but to be *withheld* within the new work. How might we archive or annotate the willfully withheld?

Referencing Bergson, Lyotard points out that remembering also entails the engagement of a meta-practice, in whose mastery we are likely to see the development of expertise and aesthetic signature: for the practitioner, then,

there is not only ...delay in the reaction to stimulus, not only the suspension and reserv[ation] of this reaction as potential (i.e. habit), but the grasp[ing] of this inhibited reaction even when it is not called up by the present situation. (51)

Such a process, Lyotard argues, 'implies...the intervention of a meta-agency [in the maker] which inscribes on itself, conserves and makes available the action-reaction pair independently of the present time and place' (52)

'So you are building yourself a repertory of language which most people I have worked with would write down. And although it isn't absolutely then part of the next run-through, the possibilities of process that are brought in have been enlarged through the dialogue.

What can go wrong is if there is an immediate shift, where you suggest something and then it immediately changes – that isn't the point of the replay, the reliving of it, you have to be quite careful about that.

Somehow all the information has to be re-absorbed and re-set, which was why I was never sure about what would ever happen, and I am sure I never will. But I think that I have built up experience now as to know that in a way the expectation is unknown – and maybe that's the nature of the work – and that in a way is what is enigmatic and what is interesting about it.' (Butcher in conversation with Stefanie Sachsenmaier, May 2015)

In *The Test Pieces*, Butcher advises, the use of live cameras projecting onto monitors placed in the space focuses, extracts and magnifies the engagement and connection between the dancers. 'As you watch it, you realize the passing of events'. Only when the dancers come in line with the camera, an image of them is screened, providing a different sense of duration to the work.

The Test Pieces, she adds, is a very difficult piece to perform as it is about recording itself: 'in a way it's like the news – there is never the final news. Creating new news, a new event, every time it's done, it is built up with the same associations. She will never see, in this sense, something resolved in her own mind.

Scanning or remembering, in Lyotard's account, allows us to attribute to Butcher's making processes a recall that can transcend the spatio-temporal specifics of a particular, identifiable, 'source' occasion of past making, which, in her case, draws on numerous instances of making's past or pasts; but the notion of the unconscious in memory, that seems to 'thicken' certain actions or performance-making choices, seems to us to be of particular interest precisely because it troubles any apparently straightforward attempt to document or notate 'performance actions'.

In this sense, what we might well want to archive is not simply a sequence of works made or actions taken over specific periods of time, but also the evidence of a growing critical meta-practice - the increasing expertise, and awareness of options for making, critiquing and excluding work, of the choreographer, her signature as expert practitioner:

On this approach, [expert practice] is itself immediately grasped as technique, and a technique of a higher rank, a meta-technique. As opposed to simple breaching, [practice]-memory implies properties unknown to habit: the denotation of what it retains (thanks to its symbolic transcription), recursivity ...and self-reference... (52)

'*Techne*', he adds, 'is the abstract from *tikto* which means *to engender, to generate*', suggesting to us that Butcher's 'signature practices' generate, over time, recognizable 'new work' that calls back and remembers (*re-member*, as in the body's members) the past in the present work. The new work must resonate for its maker/s ('something [un-]resolved in her own mind'). For the experienced spectator, the new work resonates with and reactivates traces she has retained of its own past. Choreographic practice as a form of 'technologos' is therefore 'remembering [or scanning], and not only habit. Its self-referential capacity, reflection in the usual sense...is exercised by remembering its own presuppositions and implications as its limitations' (53).

The question of the unconscious of memories and the issue of *tikto* or a generative nexus liable to engender work that is both recognizable, resonant with the past as well as 'new', seems to us to chime with the double notion of 'capturing intention' and of 'the right words' that we introduced above. The inscription is required to be longer, more delicate and detailed, 'thicker',

invaded perhaps by a stronger sense of uncertainty and ambiguity. Clearly 'intention', 'nexus' and the unconscious are difficult notions for the archivist or annotator, precisely because they are abstractions, and as such have no ready digital signifiers. Instead, the archivist needs to draw attention not to the continuous detail of actions taken, but to what might seem to be recurring 'particularities' and perhaps 'peculiarities' in the work which may serve as pointers to or symptoms of the not yet inscribed. This requires of the archivist an acute eye not just for selection and omission, informed by the specifics of this particular focus, but for inflection or emphasis. Butcher's work is itself a carrier of abstraction that is heightened by the minimalism of the work's articulation in its event. It is precisely here that we bring into the picture the third of Lyotard's memory-effects – 'passing' – which we judge to be vital to Butcher's questioning engagement with her own material.

'Finally', he writes, a few words about 'passing': 'this is another memorization, linked to a writing which is different from the inscription by breaching or experimentation, different from habitual repetition or voluntary remembering'. He uses the term 'passing' to allude to 'working through', the Freudian notion that takes up 'the *through* of the English *working through*' that is invited of the analysand (54). The word 'work', he observes, 'is very deceptive. There is also work in every technique: there is no breaching or scanning without some expenditure of energy'. The process of passing however uses up more force than other techniques, because it is a technique 'with no rule, or a negative rule, deregulation' – and, some might observe, no straightforward answers; and this, in a very clear sense, poses a particular dilemma for the digital archivist. Passing or 'working through' involves a 'generativity with, if possible, no set-up other than the absence of set-up'. It needs to 'pass beyond the reminder of what has been forgotten', and it entails an inscription that seems to be 'from afar, from very far, and for very far, in time and space' (55). It involves a dreaming, perhaps, or an ongoing search, in the sense that Butcher is a searcher (whereas some of us are researchers).

In our view, Lyotard is not simply playing here with Freudian riddles. Rather, he is 'working through' something (some *thing*?) with which, in Butcher's case, performance work *that works* may well be shadowed, or doubled, or thickened.

(What was I doing, then, and what am I doing now?) The expert not-knowing of the artist is widely acknowledged in published Practice as Research accounts. Making new work, from this perspective, allows the artist to rehearse the possibility of discovering something that she/we have all forgotten - albeit differently in different instances. Lyotard signals that what he is talking about here is what in Plato is called anamnesis, a mode of (re-)discovery of an ancient knowledge that has not been forgotten, so much as not yet learnt and articulated (56).

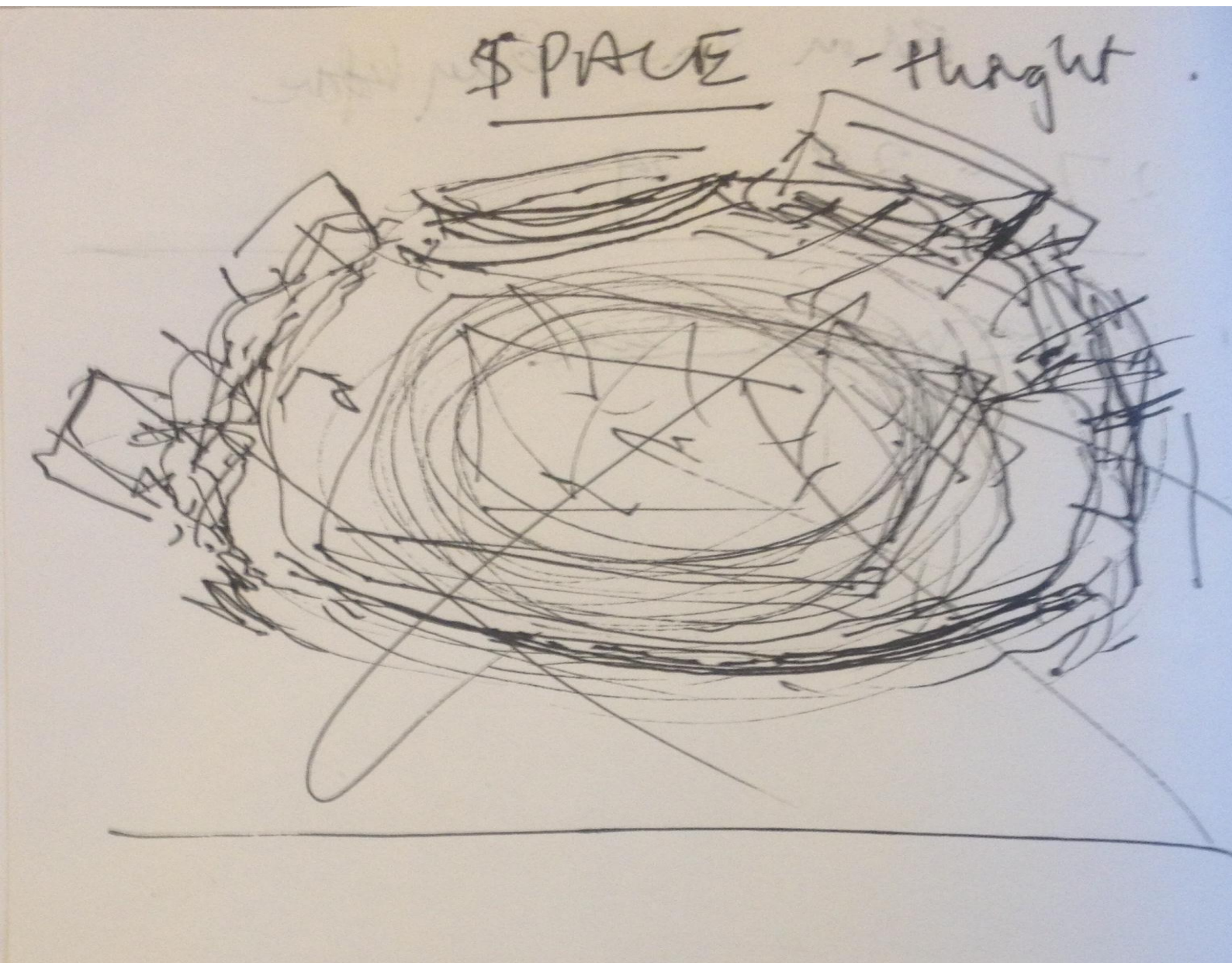


Fig 6

Notebook Rosemary Butcher

What do we (researchers) want from Rosemary Butcher, when we use the words “document”, “record”, “annotate”, archive? (The much more fleeting and perhaps fitting word she uses, in contrast, as we have seen, is “memories”, which, re-actualized ‘in the new work’, are no longer that.) What does she want from herself, at this stage in her professional career?

Derrida’s original title, above, was *Mal d’Archive*, the initial negative perhaps better suggesting the artist’s pains and troubles in attempting to produce her or his own archive. Perhaps it is “work”, in Lyotard’s use of the term, again Freudian and psychoanalytic in origin, that should be centre-field – even though, then, the archive cannot end, because the *working through* (neither the artist’s, nor our own) does not end.

Does it thereby lose its authority? In critical terms, the archive, Derrida observes, *is not at all a way to recall*: it is a way of forgetting. It stands in, as externalized ‘thing’, for a memory which – in the living artist – is otherwise a creative resource. In Freud, Derrida remarks,

...the archive... will never be either memory or anamnesis as spontaneous, alive and internal experience. On the contrary: the archive takes place at the place of originary and structural breakdown of the said memory. (Derrida, 1995:11-12)

Making work is for Butcher about ‘resolving issues in the moment between what I want remembered and what I want to take with me, and who will come after me, and who will pick up my deposits, so-to-speak, and what will they do with them.’

Yet Butcher does not approach the work on her archive in this way: according to her, she does not attach herself in the same way to the work she has done in the past. ‘It is what is there, and I don’t want to think about it very much. [...] I don’t revisit my own work emotionally. There is no emotion attached to choreographing. It is hard work.’

She also values the fact that the archive is a resource she would still like to use.

‘I listen to a lot of programs in which artists talk about the past all the time, and they don’t want to go back, don’t feel like going back.’ But Butcher needs to call the work back. She has registered that some of her work has not been seen enough and for her it is important to have the opportunity for the work to be rel looked at.

Moreover, she feels that the audience at the time it was first made might not have accepted the work. ‘It is very interesting that a new audience sees it very differently. [...] But that’s not to do with me leaving a mark, it is about me coming to terms with myself, coming to terms with something that has been very central to my life.’



Fig 7

***SCAN* (2002)**

Choreography Rosemary Butcher. **Visual artist** - Vong Phaophanit; **Composer** - Cathy Lane; **Performers** - Henry Montes, Laurent Potter, Fin Walker, Jonathan Burrows

Rosemary Butcher concludes: 'I can also see how boring it would be, though, if you were not fundamentally into understanding the value of art – art and culture – how things are actually worked out in front of you that you can't work out for yourself.'

But they actually engage you in making you think differently about the way you live your life. I think that is its value at its best. [...] Art should allow you – even if you

don't like it – to reconstruct your associations with your own present. And that is what is so important about seeing work, and why it's so essential to keep revisiting not my own work so much as any work.'

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